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A  
LETTER

TO THE

Gentlemen of *the* Common  
Council.

By a CITIZEN and Watchmaker.

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TO THE  
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LONDON,  
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1756.

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THE  
OF THE

GENTLEMEN

OF THE

COMMON COUNCIL



CITY OF LONDON, SUFFOLK STREET, WATSON'S BUILDING.



LONDON

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A

# LETTER

TO THE

## Gentlemen of the Common Council.

By a CITIZEN and Watchmaker.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Moment our good LORD  
MAYOR had determined to call  
us together, at this unusual Season, I re-  
solved to lay before You my Thoughts,  
however indigested through Want of  
Time, upon the supposed Occasion of our  
Meeting. I considered only, that he,  
who writes from the Dictates of his Heart,

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hath

hath little need of Preparation, and that Truth neither requires the Colouring of Language, nor the Artifices of reasoning. But if I were inclined to practise them, yet I understand no Artifice. I am a plain Man, who have gained a moderate Fortune, and maintained a decent Reputation by Honesty and Industry. But I would not wander from my Subject.

If the Intention of our Meeting, as is generally believed, is to address His MAJESTY upon the present Situation of public Affairs, let us reflect with Pleasure, that this great City is going to resume her ancient Dignity, and assert her due Influence in whatever regards the Welfare of the Nation.

THAT she may preserve this Influence, let us endeavour in our Address to speak the universal Sense of the Kingdom, and give

give to other Cities an Example, at once, of Spirit and Moderation. Let us remember, that our Unanimity will be a powerful Argument in Favour of our Determinations, and a Proof of our own Conviction of the Rectitude of whatever we propose: that we shall appear a Kind of Representatives of all the commercial Interests of Great Britain, and that, altho' an honest Warmth of Temper, a certain Degree of Indignation will be allowed to the present Distresses of our Country, yet all Appearance of Passion will lessen the Dignity of our Character. Let us with all Humility lay before His MAJESTY our Sentiments of those Measures, by which his Crown hath been dishonoured, and so fair a Part of his Dominions ignominiously abandoned to the Enemy. But let not our Enemies behold any Abatement of our Affection and Duty to his sacred Person and Family. Let

them rather see our Reliance upon his Wisdom and Magnanimity ; our Ardour and Resolution to support him with our Lives and Fortunes. Neither in Fact is France become more formidable by her Conquest, than she was, when we beheld her, some few Months ago, with almost an Air of Triumph. Whatever Advantage she hath gained, hath not been gained over this Nation, but over the phlegmatic Indolence of the Person, who superintendents our naval Affairs, and the natural Timidity, improved and still improving by Age, of one noble Lord, in whom is placed the whole Direction and Power of the Administration. The naval Glory of the Nation, one single Man excepted, is still acknowledged ; the Spirit of our People is yet unbroken, and our Resources numerous and powerful.

It hath been the professed Design of some, who would assume the Character of Patriots, to represent the Nation as absolutely, and beyond all Hope undone. For what valuable Purpose thus represented, I really cannot conjecture. Our political Writers have taken the same Tone, and in daily Declamation piteously lament over the unavoidable Ruin of their Country. But these Gentlemen are Patriots through their Indigence, and their Declamations are their Subsistence. Yet one Writer of a very different Character, with Regard to his Fortune, lately made his Appearance. The Test, or constitutional Journal was duly prepared. All Arts were used, Advertisements, Promises, Expectations and Disappointments to raise the Attention of the Public. The Paper made its one Appearance, when the Author, finding the Spirit of two Hours haranguing unable to animate one

Quarter

Quarter of an Hour's reading, modestly turned his Genius to the merry-making of Ballads. Is then the national Indignation to be trifled away in singing and rhyming? Are we really, and already, become so much Frenchmen, as to sing when we are angry? Is this the Resentment befitting a great People, and recommended to us by one of our Representatives? Will ever this Gentleman hereafter blame the general Inattention and Insensibility of the Age, when he himself, with all his Patriot Feelings, is amused with the low Pleasantries, that divert our Streets? The House is on Fire, and we are singing in the midst of the Flames.

FROM the very favourable Opinion we had entertained of this Gentleman's Abilities, we were encouraged to expect the clear and ample Proofs of Misconduct in  
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the Minister. It was a Task apparently of no great Difficulty. Nor this our greatest Expectation, when informed, I mean only by common Report, by whom he was assisted. Was it unreasonable to expect some wiser Plan of Operations, to animate the Nation under its Distresses, and preserve it from approaching Ruin ? Why might not such Plan be laid before the Public ? Why delayed, perhaps for ever, for the Judgment of the Parliament ? The Approbation of the Public might have had its due Weight in carrying it into Execution.

BUT it hath been the easy Task of this Gentleman , among others, merely to convince us of our Misfortunes. Can they imagine we do not feel them ? Instead of applying Remedies, the Physician tells his Patient, his Disorder is incurable , his Constitution irrecoverably broken,

broken, the *stamina vitæ* worn out, and the Symptoms of Death are in his Face. Were it not more compassionate to encourage the poor Wretch to support his Misery with Fortitude, and to exert his little Remainder of Strength with the Hopes of his Recovery?

To apply these Images. We feel the Distresses, to which a long Train of Errors hath reduced us. We have lately suffered a Loss, not easily recoverable. Minorca is lost. But not the Spirit of the Nation, its natural Strength, and the Powers of its Constitution, are lost. Our Enemies cannot surely have gained so great an Advantage over us by this one Misfortune, that we should totally despair. Our Fleets are equally superior to those of the French, as before St. Philip's was taken. Our national Forces are now sufficient to repel an Invasion; and these

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Auxiliaries, so dishonourable, though necessary, by our Indolence in raising our national Troops, may be dismiss with Safety. Even in the gloomiest Apprehensions, let us be assured of these Maxims, that no Man ever knew his own Strength, whether acting or suffering ; that no Nation ever exerted its utmost Efforts, certainly never unsuccessfully ; that the Public never can be poor, while the private is rich ; that Religion hath inexhaustible Resources, and Liberty employs them all. If there be Truth in Reason, the pure Religion of the Gospel can never be totally depressed by Popish Superstition, or British Liberty enslaved by French Tyranny.

I CONFESS, GENTLEMEN, I designed to have supported this Assertion, which I have ventured to call a Maxim, that no Nation ever exerted its utmost

*Efforts unsuccessfully, by Examples from our own History, of which I imagine myself a tolerable Master.* I thought, the Example of our Ancestors might animate their Descendants. But there is no such Instance, in the British History, of national Dishonour, as we, the Descendants of those glorious Ancestors, this Moment suffer, and are bequeathing to our Posteriority. They were generally Conquerors, or when they lost a Battle, they lost not their Reputation with it, for their Enemies did Honour to their Courage.

I P R E T E N D not to much Knowledge in ancient History. My younger Days were applied to the Busines of my Profession. But I dare believe there are numerous Examples of Greck and Roman Virtue happily exerted for the Preservation of those great Republics, even in their extrekest Danger. I am able at present to

to recollect only two Instances, but those, I fancy, I can give with a tolerable Degree of Exactness.

WHEN Xerxes invaded Greece, and in a particular Manner denounced Vengeance on the Athenians (they were probably called ROBBERS and PYRATES in his Declaration of War) that glorious People abandoned their City, the Temples of their Gods, and the Sepulchres of their Ancestors (according to the Language of their Historians) to the Spoil and Ravage of the Persians. They transported their Wives and Children to Salamis. Then, animated with the sacred Ardors of Liberty and Love of Country, they engaged, defeated, routed the Barbarians. From this Period their Historians date their future Glory.

WHEN the Consul, by whose Impe-  
tuosity the Romans were impelled to ven-  
ture the Battle of Cannæ, in which they  
were defeated with the Slaughter of al-  
most fifty thousand Citizens; when he was  
entering Rome, the Senate and all other  
Orders of the State went out to receive  
him, as if had returned with Victory.  
They gave him their solemn Thanks, for  
not despairing of the Safety of the Com-  
monwealth, even after such a Misfortune,  
and for returning to place himself at the  
Head of the Laws and Armies of the Re-  
public. This Act of Wisdom, for I do  
not mention it with Regard to its Mag-  
nanimity alone, restored the Spirit of the  
People, and made them believe the Senate  
had powerful and effectual Resources still  
remaining to vindicate the Honour and  
retrieve the Misfortunes of their Country.

IT is not without Shame and Confusion of Face, that in their present Degeneracy, I think myself obliged to mention the Dutch, as Examples of this Patriot Magnanimity. But we are permitted to learn Virtue from every Nation upon Earth, who have ever reverenced the Name of Liberty, or knew to value its Blessings. They formed their poor, distressed States beneath the immediate Oppressions of the Spanish Monarchy. They have since maintained the Dignity of their Republic against the united Powers of France and England. When France was infinitely more formidable, than she is at present, they singly opposed the rapid Conquests of her Monarch, and appeared nobly determined, in the Expression of our glorious Deliverer, to die in their last Dyke. While these Examples, and Sentiments like these, inspire and animate the Hearts of Britons, they never can be conquered;

conquered ; they never can submit to Slavery.

BUT to whose Integrity, to whose Abilities shall we intrust the Preservation of their Country? Let the Destination of our Fleets ; their Weakness ; the Delays in sending them, and, in one important Instance, the Choice of an Admiral, untried and unknown in the most necessary Part of his military Capacity ; let these Proofs evince the Knowledge of that Person, who hath had the sole Direction of our naval Affairs ; let them prove his Discernment in the Choice of Officers, whom he employs, and his attention to the Preservation of His MAJESTY's Dominions. Or if an acknowledged Skill in Election-Intrigues at home can suppose another great Man capable of sustaining the Character and Interests of the Nation in Foreign Courts ; if Expedients are Measures,

sures, and Artifices are the Arts of Politics, then let a noble D—— continue to preside at the Head of our Administration. Confessedly, no Man so fit for that high Office.

BUT what an unaccountable Creature is Man ! By Nature irresolute, and obstinate by Habitude. Bold and venturous in holding an unmanageable, self-destructive Power, yet fearful and timid in the Measures, which can alone maintain him in that Power. If such a Man were a Pilot, though frightened by every idle Storm , and rendered by his Fears less capable of acting ; though conscious how just the Clamours of the Ship's Company, Merchants, Owners, Passengers and Sailors ; though not unapprehensive of Danger from their Menaces, yet he would probably hold fast the Helm, in Hopes the Tempest would blow over. Even when

when the Storm overpowers him, he seems to think the Steerage, where he stands, will sink last in the general Shipwreck.

BUT not to wander too long in Similitudes, which have confessedly very little Proof, though much Illustration, let me be permitted to ask this one simple, unprejudiced Question. Can we reasonably suppose, that the same Persons, who have unhappily reduced the Nation to its present inglorious Distresses, shall ever be able, whether by their Courage or their Wisdom, to relieve the Nation from these inglorious Distresses? Impossible. We may as well suppose them capable of re-taking Minorca, which they have lost by their Indolence, Timidity and Inactivity. We may with juster Reason imagine them more perplexed in their own Errors, and more incapable of acting, to any

any valuable Purpose, by that Loss of Power, they have suffered in their Loss of Reputation.

I HAVE now, GENTLEMEN, brought down these Reflexions to the Point, at which I aimed; that if these great Persons are displaced, to whom should we wish His MAJESTY would intrust his own and the Nation's Happiness, and Honour? But if I should appear, like all other Projectors, too much enamoured of my own Scheme, yet I frankly confess, it has not any Excuse from the little Time I have for writing; it hath been long the Object of my best Attention, and is now the last reasoning of my Understanding.

OUR Patriot Writers unanimously declare for turning out all the great Officers of State, at present in the Administra-

tion. This Proposal hath too much Violence in it; nor is it easily practicable. It hath an Air of Party, which would prevent its own good Effects, if it were carried into Execution. It would probably continue an unseasonable, and therefore destructive Opposition. Nor, for the Honour of our Country, would I willingly ask, whether, if all these Gentlemen were turned out, we have others of more unblemished Integrity, and more acknowledged Abilities, to fill all their Places. However, there are two Gentlemen of apparent Superiority to all others in either Party. They have both continued long in Offices of greatest Trust and Power, with unsuspected Reputation. They differed last Year in their Judgment of public Measures. Their Contest was maintained with a Warmth, which might naturally rise from their mutual Conviction. Their Reconciliation is now become necessary

cessary to the Welfare, perhaps, to the very Being of their Country. If their Contest was of Virtue, they will easily be reconciled. Great Spirits cannot long maintain little Resentments, and if the Love of Country be their prevailing Passion, it will subdue all others ; for in Effect there is but one Passion in the Heart of Man. Their common Friends may propose and settle the Terms of their Union ; but the Nation, in these her Distresses, calls upon them, implores, conjures, I had almost said, commands them to unite. She hath more than enough to gratify their personal Ambition ; enough to indulge them in obliging and making happy their mutual Friends.

PERMIT me, GENTLEMEN, nor is it wholly foreign to the Purpose of this Letter, permit me to mention some of those Advantages, which I am per-

suaed, will arise from this Union. If they are each of them superior to every other Man, most capable of serving the Public; if they were singly opposed to each other last Winter, who shall be able to form an Opposition against them, when united? The Measures, necessary to retrieve the Honour of the Nation, will easily then be carried into Execution: not distressed by midnight Debates, which not only fruitlessly consumed so many valuable Hours, but must have rendered the Speakers listless and inattentive to next Day's Business. If they are not wholly inexcusable in throwing away the Winter in these unprofitable Debates, let us remember, that one of these Gentlemen was actuated by the human Resentment of being turned out of his Employment; nor can we suppose him less sensibly affected for his Friends. The other probably imagined, if he could excuse  
*himself* the

the Measures of the Minister, for Instance, the Hessian Treaty, he might have Influence enough over him to direct him afterwards to better Counsels. But such is the Gratitude of Ambition, that this Gentleman must have been long since convinced, he was mistaken in his Hopes; and that a Man so tenacious of governing, as obstinately to hold his Power amidst the Errors, or let us call them the Misfortunes of his Administration; amidst the dangerous Resentments of the People, will never admit a Partner in his Administration. For if we know any Thing of this Gentleman, Fearfulness and Timidity is no Part of his Character, from whence we may believe, he had no Share in the late timid Expedients, by which Minorca was lost. But, indeed, what Share

Share of Power or Confidence could he expect, who was at once feared and hated.

BUT, I am wandering from the Proof of those Advantages, which I flatter myself will attend the Completion of my Scheme. These two Gentlemen acting from their own, uninfluenced Judgment, cannot be compelled to any Compliances, either base in themselves, or injurious to their Country. Neither to lavish away the last Treasures of the Nation in ignominious and unavailing Subsidies; nor to sacrifice one British Interest to the Preservation of any foreign Dominions. They cannot be obliged to bend the Dignity of their Administration, to Stock-Jobbers and Money-Changers. Employments, Places, Pensions, will then be given to Merit

Merit and Abilities; nor shall we ever hear a great Officer of State pleading his being only four Months in Office, as an Excuse for not knowing the common, customary Forms of it; or appealing to his Clerk for the constant Practice in sending his Dispatches. Such an amazing, unexampled Instance of Ignorance could never be believed by any less incontestible Proof, than his own candid Acknowledgement; yet from this Ignorance, and in his own Language, the *not adverting to* these most necessary Forms, hath arisen such Confusion and Contradiction, that discretionary Orders are to be positively obeyed, and unintelligible Letters to be clearly understood. For such Jargon is now become the Language, that demands a punctual and unconditional Obedience.

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GIVE me Leave to suppose I had his Lordship's Orders for making him a Clock. I send it home. It puts all the Family into Confusion. The Chaplain knows not the canonical Hour for Prayers. The Butler blunders in laying his Side-board, and the Cook in sending up Dinner. Whence is all this Confusion? The Clock points one Hour and strikes another. Would his Lordship think it a sufficient Excuse, if I told him I had been only four Months at the Trade? Or shall I be weak enough to call my Apprentice to convict me upon Oath, that I did not know the first Principles of my Busines? But I beg Pardon, and acknowledge this Affair is of too serious a Nature to be treated with the Levity of langhing. It will probably be made, as it surely well deserves, a Matter of national Inquiry,  
and

and then, if my poor Abilities can be serviceable to Mr. F——ke, and, as from my Soul I think, to the Justice of his Cause, he may frankly command them. I shall only remark here, that they, who advise their SOVEREIGN to any Act of Power contrary to his natural Clemency, will have very little Right to the public Compassion, when they shall themselves become Objects of his Justice.

BUT if the Author of this Letter should ever be encouraged by Your Approbation, GENTLEMEN, and that of the Public, to write again, permit him to assure You, that no Sentiments of Slavery and adulation; no Language unbecoming the Character of a Citizen of this great Metropolis; no Principles dishonourable or injurious to Liberty; no personal In-

E vective,

vective, or private Slander, shall ever stain his Writings. He is determined never to know any other Friends, or other Enemies, but those, who are Enemies or Friends to the best of Princes, the Protestant Succession in his illustrious House; to the Laws and Liberties and Constitution of GREAT BRITAIN.

I am,

GENTLEMEN,



Your most obedient

Servant,